

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Twin Cities Campus

*UNITE Instructional Television
Technical Operations
Institute of Technology*

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October 21, 2003

Secretary
Federal Communication Commission
The Portals
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington D.C. 20554

Reference: FCC Docket No. 03-66, RM-10586

From: University of Minnesota
114 Lind Hall
207 Church Street S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55455

ITFS Licensee: Regents of the University of Minnesota

Campus Unit: UNITE Instructional Television (UNiversity-Industry-Television for Education)

ITFS Channels in Use:

C1-4, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota, Call Letters, WHR-636
G1-4, Hader (serving Rochester), Minnesota, Call Letters, WIG-34

Reply Comments in support of NIA/CTN/WCA proposal:

Life long learning is a hallmark of our modern global information-age economy and an essential feature of career development in the 21st century. Effective anytime, anyplace learning environments are critical in this age of rapid changes within society and the work place. UNITE Instructional Television, a unit of the University of Minnesota that provides distance learning courses over ITFS facilities, is proud to be a leader in this effort by providing continuing educational opportunities for engineering and science professionals through distance education.

For 32 years UNITE has delivered high-quality educational programming to distance learners around the Twin Cities and Rochester, MN. Currently, employees at 28 member companies, including 3M, IBM, Seagate and Medtronic, view credit and non-credit courses at 32 corporate sites. The courses offered over the UNITE ITFS system have become an invaluable resource that local companies use to attract and retain valuable employees.

UNITE offers approximately 55 courses per semester leading to Masters degrees in Computer Science, Computer Engineering and Electrical Engineering. Additional offerings include graduate level courses in Biomedical Engineering, selected undergraduate science and engineering courses, and a wide range of seminars and short courses. Of the approximately 300 professionals per semester registered through UNITE, approximately 35 per year receive their Master's degree, with many others taking courses for career development without the objective of obtaining a degree.

Our future plans include working with the successor to WorldCom (Nextel currently is slated to assume our Agreement with WorldCom) in using our capacity to deliver courses digitally and bring two-way wireless broadband services to students, faculty and staff on both of the University of

Minnesota's Twin City campuses. Through digital technology, UNITE plans to meet the growing demand for additional engineering courses. We also plan to offer Biotechnology Masters degrees. The growth we foresee will increase the number of courses we deliver per semester and add additional corporate members.

The University of Minnesota is in full support for the coalition proposal, as reflected in the comments and reply comments of the WCA/NIA/CTN, especially the new band plan. The University also supports the separate issues raised by NIA/CTN in their separate comments and reply comments, especially, the need to retain current eligibility requirements for ITFS licenses.

Respectfully,

Edwin N. Thorud
Station Manager